



# EURO-NET

## The Youth European Network



EUROPE DIRECT BASILICATA centre  
promoted by the association EURO-NET  
and realised with the grant of E.U. in  
the framework of the namesake project

### *Bimonthly newsletter:*

- to spread European opportunities and initiatives,
- to disseminate the respect of human rights and the awareness about the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity,
- to fight discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance and racism,
- to help, with youth activities, the democratic stability and social inclusion in Europe,
- develop active European citizenship and civil society by giving impetus to the training of youth leaders and youth workers working within a European dimension;
- to promote European youth activities, such as exchanges, seminars, conferences, debates and training courses,
- to encourage exchange of ideas, proposals, experiences and good practises at international level.

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## 1. EU long-term budget after 2020

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**Ahead of the Informal Leaders' meeting on 23 February 2018, the European Commission is setting out various options – and their financial consequences – for a new and modern, long-term EU budget that delivers efficiently on its priorities after 2020.**

European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said: *"Budgets are not bookkeeping exercises – they are about priorities and ambition. They translate our future into figures. So let's first discuss about the Europe we want. Then, Member States must back their ambition up with the money to match. And whilst we all need to understand that business as usual is not an option for this upcoming discussion, I firmly believe that we can square the circle and agree on a budget where everyone will be a net beneficiary."* At their meeting on 23 February, the European Union's Leaders will discuss about how to ensure that the priorities they have set for the Union - on 16 September 2016 in Bratislava and on 25 March 2017 in the Rome Declaration - can



be adequately funded and thus turned into reality. Both elements – defining common priorities and equipping the Union to implement them – are inseparable. The Commission is contributing to this important discussion in three ways: First, by providing the necessary facts about the EU budget, its benefits, achievements and added value. Second, by drawing up scenarios which illustrate the financial impact of various possible policy choices. And third, by showing the consequences for students, researchers, infrastructure projects and many others in case the adoption of the new EU budget were to be delayed.

### **Options for the future EU budget**

When discussing about the level of ambition of EU action in areas like protecting the EU's external borders, supporting a true European Defence Union, boosting Europe's digital transformation or making the EU's cohesion and agricultural policies more efficient, it is important for the Leaders to ascertain what their choices would mean concretely in terms of funding at EU level. The contribution from the Commission seeks to do exactly that - by quantifying the financial impact of various possible policy choices. Those are not the Commission's own proposals, but illustrations based on ideas frequently put forward in the public debate. Their purpose is to focus minds, to stimulate discussion and to provide a sound factual basis for making the important choices that lie ahead. For example, if Leaders agree to honor the frequently made pledge to improve the protection of the EU's external borders, this would cost €20 to 25 bn over seven years, and up to €150 billion for a full EU border management system. Indeed, each political priority - the European Defence Union, supporting the mobility of young people, powering Europe's digital transformation, boosting research and innovation or underpinning a genuine Economic and Monetary Union – will need to be properly funded to become a reality.

### **Modernising and financing the EU budget**

The Commission is also setting out options to modernise the EU budget, including by making the link between the goals of the EU budget and the way it is funded stronger. Moreover, it sets out possibilities for strengthening the link – often referred to as "conditionality" - between EU funding and the respect for the EU's fundamental values..

### **Timing matters – for citizens and businesses**

A swift political agreement on a new, modern EU budget will be essential to demonstrate that the Union is ready to deliver on the positive political agenda outlined in Bratislava and Rome. Commissioner in charge of Budget and Human Resources, **Günther H. Oettinger** said: *"We must not repeat the unfortunate experience of 2013 when the current EU budget was agreed with considerable delay. If such a delay were to happen again, more than 100,000 EU-funded projects – in key areas like business support, energy efficiency, health care, education and social inclusion - would not be able to start on time, and hundreds of thousands of young people would not be able to benefit from an Erasmus+ exchange in 2021".* Beyond being politically desirable, an early agreement is also a practical imperative. Partners and beneficiaries of EU funding – from students and researchers to infrastructure, health care or energy projects - as well as national and regional authorities deserve and need legal and financial certainty. The Commission draws the Leaders' attention to concrete examples of the detrimental impact which a delay would have on citizens and businesses all across the EU. The Commission believes that the unfortunate experience with the

late adoption of the current EU budget – with significant delays in the launch of the new programmes and, consequently, in achieving the funding priorities – should not be repeated.

#### **Next steps**

The European Commission will table its formal proposal for the next long-term EU budget in the coming months, at the latest in early May 2018. In the meantime, the Commission will continue listening to all stakeholders, including via the [public consultations](#) on the priorities of the EU that were launched in January 2018.

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## **2. Commission presents ideas for a more efficient European Union**

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**Ahead of the Informal Leaders' meeting on 23 February 2018, the European Commission is presenting a number of practical steps that could make the European Union's work more efficient, and improve the connection between the leaders of the EU institutions and the citizens of Europe.**

European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said : *"With the Bratislava Roadmap, the Rome Declaration and now the Leaders' Agenda, Europe has rightly been focused on creating a Union that delivers concrete and tangible results for its citizens on the issues that matter to them. We must continue on this path. I have always said that form should follow function – now is not the time for long discussions of institutional reform or Treaty change. There are, however, a number of steps we can take to make our work even more efficient in delivering on our key priorities. There are many options but the goal must be one and the same: creating a Europe that delivers."*

#### **Lead Candidates: Building on the 2014 "Spitzenkandidaten" experience**

The 2014 election process strengthened the relationship between the three EU institutions and improved the efficiency of their work. It helped them to align themselves around a common work programme for the five year mandate. This is what enabled the Juncker Commission to work in a more political way and concentrate on where the Union delivers the best results, leaving the rest to



Member States. In his 2017 State of the Union Address, President Juncker said that the 2014 'lead candidate' experiment should continue. The European Commission is setting out how the process can be improved on the basis of the current Treaties while respecting the balance between the EU institutions and among the Member States. This includes calling on **political parties to make an earlier choice of the lead candidates, before the end of 2018, and for an earlier start to the campaign.** This would give voters

more opportunity to identify with the candidates and the political programmes they stand for. The Commission is also recommending the link **between national parties and European parties be made more visible.** Political parties at national level should boost transparency about the European parties they are affiliated to, for example by using their logos in campaign and ballot material. They should also position themselves clearly on important European issues and express their intention for participating in political groups in the European Parliament and their choice for European Commission President.

#### **Composition of the European Parliament and the European Commission**

Leaders in the European Council have to decide – on the basis of a proposal from the European Parliament – on **the composition of the European Parliament for the 2019-2024 term** and what to do with the seats left vacant by the UK. One option is to reserve a number of these seats for a **transnational constituency.** Whilst in a recent Resolution (from 7 February), the European Parliament voted not to call for the creation of a transnational constituency, it did leave the door open for future debates. A number of Member States have recently expressed support for this idea, whereas others have expressed their disagreement with its establishment. A transnational constituency could strengthen the European dimension of the election by giving candidates the possibility to reach more citizens across Europe. On the other hand, parliamentarians normally represent and communicate closely with the voters who elected them on a local or national level, both for reasons of accountability and to be able to raise concerns of their constituents. The Commission is sympathetic to the idea of transnational lists, but this will require unanimous

agreement of the Council, and changes to electoral law in all 27 Member States in the next year to be applied for the 2019 elections. **The College of Commissioners currently consists of 28 members**, one from each Member State – in line with a Decision of the European Council from 22 May 2013. Before the next European Commission is appointed, leaders will have to decide whether to maintain the principle of one Member from each Member State, or to make the Commission smaller. A smaller executive would in theory be more efficient in its operation, easier to manage and would allow a more balanced distribution of portfolios. But a smaller Commission would also mean that some Member States would not be represented at the political level of the institution, and would lose the advantage of maintaining a direct political communication channel with their citizens and national authorities.

#### **A Double-Hatted President for the Commission and Council**

In his State of the Union speech in 2017, President Juncker first suggested the idea of a double-hatted President. A single person holding the two offices of President of the European Council and President of the European Commission could make the structure of the Union more efficient. This is possible under the current Treaties. A dual appointment does not require merging the two institutions. The President of the European Commission is already a Member of the European Council, and neither of the two Presidents vote in the European Council; their role is to advise, bring input from the work of their services, help to build bridges and map out common ground.

#### **Citizens' Dialogues**

The European Commission regularly organises Citizens' Dialogues with Members of the Commission, the European Parliament, national governments, local and regional authorities and civil society representatives. Almost 500 of these interactive public debates have been held in 160 locations since 2012, and the Commission will increase their frequency between now and the European elections in May 2019, with a target of reaching around **500 more events**. The Commission also welcomes the initiatives of individual Member States to organise their own national conversations with citizens on the future of Europe and is ready to offer its support where it can, for example by linking the process to the online consultation on the future of Europe which could remain open until 9 May 2019. The Commission will share the benefits of its experience with Member States.

#### **Background**

The proposed ideas and options are a direct follow-up to the [European Commission's report \(from 8 May 2015\) on the 2014 European Parliament elections](#) which pledged to identify ways of further enhancing the European dimension and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process, and to examine further, and seek to address, the reasons for the persistently low turnout in some Member States.

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### **3. Progress under global commitments for sustainable urban development**

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#### **At the World Urban Forum in Malaysia, the Commission takes stock of what was achieved under the three commitments put forward by the EU and its partners 15 months ago.**

Significant progress has been achieved under the three commitments since they were presented at the UN Habitat III conference in October 2016, in order to harness the power of rapid urbanisation. City-to-city cooperation is now flourishing across continents, important steps have been taken towards a single definition of cities at global level and the EU is showing the world the way to sustainable urban development with the ongoing implementation of its Urban Agenda for the EU. Speaking from the World Urban Forum in Malaysia, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said: *"Much like the fight against climate change, the EU is ready to lead the way for clean, safe and prosperous cities around the globe. Europe and its partners are delivering fast on these three concrete commitments, which contribute to shaping the cities of tomorrow."* The [three commitments](#) contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the Paris Agreement. They are part of the New Urban Agenda, also presented 15 months ago. Each of these commitments has a specific scope, expected achievements and deliverables. This is what has been achieved since end 2016:





### **Commitment to deliver the New Urban Agenda through the Urban Agenda for the EU**

3 action plans out of 12 have already been drawn up under the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#), on urban poverty, the integration of migrants and air quality. They include policy recommendations, good practices and projects to be replicated across the EU and in the world. All the action plans are expected to be completed by end 2018. Beyond the thematic action plans, the very methodology of the Urban Agenda for the EU can inspire reforms in the way cities are governed across the globe; it puts on an equal footing cities, businesses, NGOs and representatives from Member States and EU Institutions, for an integrated and balanced approach to sustainable urban development.

### **Commitment to develop a global, harmonised definition of cities**

To facilitate monitoring, benchmarking and eventually policy-making, it is important that the same definition of cities is used globally. The EU has been working on such a definition, which will be presented to the UN in March 2019, in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. So far, the Commission has gathered estimates of the level of urbanisation of each country in the world and provided free access to this data to facilitate the comparison with national definitions. At the occasion of the World Urban Forum, the Commission, via its Joint Research Centre, is publishing the global city centres database; it contains data for all 10,000 urban centres scattered across the globe. It is the largest and most comprehensive data on cities ever published. A survey is currently being carried out in 20 countries to gather feedback on the global definition. Pilot projects are ongoing in 12 countries to compare the global definition with the national ones and assess the differences. In the course of 2018, the Commission and its partners will work on a free online tool to help countries test this definition on their territories.

### **Commitment to enhance cooperation between cities in the field of sustainable urban development**

The EU's International Urban Cooperation (IUC) was launched in 2016 to support this commitment and develop city-to-city cooperation around the globe. There are currently 35 pairings under the programme, involving 70 cities (35 EU and 35 non-EU). They include Frankfurt (Germany) and Yokohama (Japan); Bologna (Italy) and Austin (USA) and Almada (Portugal) and Belo Horizonte (Brazil). All partnerships are working on local action plans on joint urban priorities, such as access to water, transport or health, sharing knowledge and best practices to reach their common goals. A new call was launched at the World Urban Forum to create at least 25 new pairings; cities can apply [online](#) until 9 March.

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## **4. Winter 2018 Interim Economic Forecast: A solid and lasting expansion**

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**Growth rates for the euro area and the EU beat expectations last year as the transition from economic recovery to expansion continues. The euro area and EU economies are both estimated to have grown by 2.4% in 2017, the fastest pace in a decade.**



This robust performance is set to continue in 2018 and 2019 with growth of 2.3% and 2.0% respectively in both the euro area and EU. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"The European economy is outperforming expectations and the robust growth is set to continue into next year. We should continue our work on ensuring that the benefits of this growth are felt by all Europeans. We should use this time to make our economies more resilient and deepen the Economic and Monetary Union."* Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Europe's economy has entered 2018 in robust health. The euro area is enjoying growth rates not seen since before the financial crisis. Unemployment and deficits continue to fall and investment is at last rising in a meaningful way. Economic growth is also more balanced than it was a decade ago - and provided we pursue smart structural reforms and responsible fiscal*

*policies - it can also be more durable. This window of opportunity to reform will not remain open forever: the moment to take the necessary ambitious decisions to strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union is now."*

### **Growth is likely to remain solid**

The 2.4% GDP growth now estimated for 2017 is above November's [Autumn Economic Forecast](#) projections of 2.2% for the euro area and 2.3% for the EU. The growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019 have also been raised since November for both the euro area and EU economies: from 2.1% to 2.3% for this year and from 1.9% to 2.0% for 2019. This is a result of both stronger cyclical momentum in Europe, where labour markets continue to improve and economic sentiment is particularly high, and a stronger than expected pick-up in global economic activity and trade. Strong demand, high capacity utilisation and supportive financing conditions are set to favour investment over the forecast horizon.

### **Inflation outlook remains subdued**

Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and unprocessed food prices, is expected to stay subdued as labour market slack recedes only slowly and wage pressures remain contained. Headline inflation will continue to reflect the significant influence of energy prices and is forecast to rise modestly. Inflation in the euro area reached 1.5% in 2017. It is forecast to remain at 1.5% in 2018 and to increase to 1.6% in 2019.

### **Risks are balanced, with upside risks in the short term**

Risks to this growth forecast remain broadly balanced. Economic growth could exceed expectations in the short term as indicated by the high level of sentiment. In the medium term, high global asset prices could be vulnerable to a re-assessment of risks and fundamentals. Downside risks related to the uncertain outcome of the Brexit negotiations remain, as do those associated with geopolitical tensions and a shift towards more inward looking and protectionist policies.

### **For the UK, a purely technical assumption for 2019**

Given the ongoing negotiations on the terms of the UK withdrawal from the EU, our projections for 2019 are based on a purely technical assumption of status quo in terms of trading relations between the EU27 and the UK. This is for forecasting purposes only and has no bearing on the talks underway in the context of the Article 50 process.

### **Background**

This forecast is based on a set of technical assumptions concerning exchange rates, interest rates and commodity prices with a cut-off date of 26 January 2018. For all other incoming data, this forecast takes into consideration information up until 30 January 2018. From this year, the European Commission will revert to publishing two comprehensive forecasts (spring and autumn) and two interim forecasts (winter and summer) each year, instead of the three comprehensive forecasts in winter, spring and autumn that it has produced each year since 2012. The interim forecasts will cover annual and quarterly GDP and inflation for the current year and following years for all Member States and the euro area, as well as EU aggregates. This change is a return to the Commission's previous pattern of forecasts and brings the Commission's forecast schedule back into line with those of other institutions (e.g. the European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).



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## **5. Strategy for the Western Balkans: initiatives for the reform-driven region**

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### **The Commission adopted a strategy for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans'.**

As President Juncker announced in his 2017 State of the Union address, the Commission adopted a strategy for '[A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans](#)', confirming the European future of the region as a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united Europe based on common values. It spells out the priorities and areas of **joint reinforced cooperation**, addressing the specific challenges the Western Balkans face, in particular the need for **fundamental reforms** and **good neighbourly relations**. A **credible enlargement perspective** requires sustained efforts and irreversible reforms. **Progress along the European path** is an objective and **merit-based process** which depends on the concrete results achieved by each individual country. The European Commission announced [six flagship](#)

**initiatives** - specific actions that the EU will take over the next years to support the transformation efforts of the Western Balkans in areas of mutual interest. These range from initiatives to strengthen the rule of law, reinforced cooperation on security and migration through joint investigating teams and the European Border and coast guard, expanding the EU Energy Union to the Western Balkans or lowering roaming charges and rolling out broadband in the region. The Strategy also underlines the need for the EU to be prepared to welcome new members once they have met the criteria. The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker** stated:



*"Investing in the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans means investing in the security and future of our Union. Although there will be no further enlargements under this mandate, the European Commission is charting the European path ahead for the Western Balkans. With strong political will, real and sustained reforms, and definitive solutions to disputes with neighbours, the Western Balkans can move forward on their respective European paths. Whether this is achieved will depend on their objective merits. The European Commission will be rigorous but it will also be fair. I will travel to each of the countries of the Western Balkans at the end of*

*this month with a clear message: keep reforming and we will keep supporting your European future."* High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** commented: *"The Western Balkans are part of Europe: we share the same history, the same geography, the same cultural heritage and the same opportunities and challenges today and in the future. We have a common interest in working more and more closely together to guarantee to our people economic and social development, and security. This strategy shows the path that we have ahead of us: for all our six partners to overcome once and for all the past, for all of us together to make the process of the Western Balkans towards the European Union irreversible and keep reuniting the Continent. This Strategy gives all of us a shared, clear, unequivocal, credible and concrete perspective for each and every one of our six partners' EU integration. The next months will be not only intense but also crucial to make sure that this historic and unique opportunity is seized."* Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** stressed: *"We confirm that the door of our Union is open for the Western Balkans which is already an enclave surrounded by the EU, and that our offer is sincere. With the new approach, underpinned by concrete measures, we are strengthening the enlargement process which requires credible efforts and reforms in return in particular to strengthen the rule of law. We have to work for the benefit of the citizens."*

#### **Focus on convincing reforms and reconciliation**

In order to meet the EU membership criteria and in their own interest, the Western Balkans need to implement **comprehensive reforms** in crucial areas. The rule of law, fundamental rights and governance must be strengthened significantly. Judicial reforms, the fight against corruption and organised crime, and public administration reform need to deliver real results and the functioning of democratic institutions need to be seriously enhanced. Economic reforms must be pursued with vigour so that structural weaknesses, low competitiveness and high unemployment rates are addressed. All countries must unequivocally commit, in both word and deed, to overcome the legacy of the past, by achieving **reconciliation and solving open issues**, in particular border disputes, well before accession to the European Union. There needs to be a comprehensive, legally-binding normalisation agreement between Serbia and Kosovo so that they can advance on their respective European paths.

#### **Six flagship initiatives to support the transformation of the Western Balkans**

The EU is already the most important donor and investor in the region as well as political partner of the Western Balkans. The EU is also the Western Balkans' largest trading partner with an annual total trade volume of €43 billion (2016). The European Commission set out **Six flagship initiatives** that will further strengthen our cooperation in a number of areas and support the transformation process in the Western Balkans. These flagship initiatives target specific areas of common interest: rule of law, security and migration, socio-economic development, transport and energy connectivity, digital agenda, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations. Concrete actions in these areas are foreseen between 2018 and 2020. To deliver on the Western Balkans Strategy and support a seamless transition to membership, adequate funding is indispensable. The European Commission proposes to gradually increase funding under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) until 2020 in so far as reallocations within the existing envelope allow.



In 2018 alone, €1.07 billion of pre-accession assistance for the Western Balkans is already foreseen, on top of almost €9 billion from the 2007-2017 period.

#### **Next steps on the EU path**

The EU's enlargement policy must be part and parcel of the larger strategy to strengthen the Union by 2025 set out by President Juncker in his State of the Union speech of September 2017 and his Roadmap for a More United, Stronger and more Democratic Union. While **the EU could become larger than 27 Members**, the dynamics of moving forward on their respective EU paths for all Western Balkans is based on their own merits and at their own speed depending on the concrete results achieved. The Strategy explains the steps that need to be taken by **Montenegro and Serbia** to complete the accession process in a 2025 perspective; while others could catch up, Montenegro and Serbia are the only two countries with which accession talks are already under way. This perspective will ultimately depend on strong political will, the delivery of real and sustained reforms, and definitive solutions to disputes with neighbours. All Western Balkan countries have the chance to move forward on their respective European paths. The Commission assesses all the countries in a fair and objective manner on the basis of their own merits and at the speed at which they achieve progress. **Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** are making significant progress on their European path and the Commission



is ready to prepare recommendations to open accession negotiations, on the basis of fulfilled conditions. The Commission will start preparing an Opinion on **Bosnia and Herzegovina's** membership application following receipt of comprehensive and complete answers to its Questionnaire. With sustained effort and engagement, Bosnia and Herzegovina could become a candidate for accession. **Kosovo** has an opportunity for sustainable progress through implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and to advance on its European path once objective circumstances allow.

#### **Political commitment from the regions' leaders**

Much work lies ahead for the countries concerned to be in a position to meet the conditions and criteria for EU membership. The Strategy highlights that leaders in the region must leave no doubt as to their strategic orientation and commitment. It is them that ultimately must assume responsibility for making this historical opportunity a reality.

#### **Preparing the EU to welcome new members**

The EU itself needs to be ready for new members of the family – once they have met the conditions – including from an **institutional and financial perspective**. The Union must be stronger, more solid and more efficient before it can be bigger. To ensure effective decision-making, we need to make use of qualified majority voting in the Council in the policy areas where this is already foreseen. In addition, the European Commission will present possibilities to further enhance the use of qualified majority voting in the third quarter of 2018 – as announced by President Juncker in his 2017 State of the Union address. A more effective system is also needed to tackle systemic threats to or breaches of the rule of law in any EU Member State with a Commission initiative to be expected in October 2018. Finally, special arrangements must be put in place to ensure that future Member States are not in a position to block the accession of other Western Balkans candidates.

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## **6. Safer drinking water for all Europeans**

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**Revised European legislation proposed by the European Commission will improve the quality of drinking water and access to it as well as provide better information to citizens.**

The right to access essential services of good quality, including water, is one of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights unanimously endorsed by Heads of State or Government at the Gothenburg Summit. The legislative proposal aims to guarantee this right and thereby responds to the first-ever successful European Citizens' Initiative, "[Right2Water](#)", that gathered 1.6 million signatures in support of improving access to safe drinking water for all Europeans. In addition this proposal seeks to empower consumers ensuring that water suppliers provide consumers with clearer information on water consumption, on the cost structure as well as on the



price per litre allowing a comparison with the price of bottled water. This will be contributing to the environmental goals of reducing unnecessary plastic use and limiting the EU's carbon footprint, as well as to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Citizens have made their voice loud and clear through the European Citizens' Initiative, calling for action to have a guaranteed access to safe drinking water. We have heard and heeded their call and carried out a thorough analysis of our existing legislation. We are therefore proposing to modernise our EU law, improving the quality of drinking water and increasing the access of citizens where it matters most. Together we can and must protect the health and safety of our citizens."* Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for growth, jobs, investment and competitiveness said: *"With this proposal we facilitate the transition to a circular economy, helping Member States manage drinking water in a resource-efficient manner. It implies reduction of energy use and unnecessary water loss. Thanks to increased transparency it will also empower consumers and push them towards more sustainable choices, for example using tap water."* Most people living in the EU enjoy very good access to high quality drinking water. This results from long standing EU legislation protecting Europeans ensuring that they have access to high quality drinking water. The Commission wants to make sure that this high quality is preserved in the long run. The rules which the Commission proposes to update will **improve water quality and safety** by adding new and emerging substances to the list of criteria for determining water



safety (such as legionella and chlorate). These additions take account of the latest scientific knowledge and recommendations of the World Health Organisation. The new rules will require Member States to **improve access for all people, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups** who currently have difficult access to drinking water. In practice, that means setting up equipment for access to drinking water in public spaces, launching campaigns to

inform citizens about the quality of their water and encouraging administrations and public buildings to provide access to drinking water. Another important change in the legislation will give the public easy, user-friendly – including online – access to **information about the quality and supply of drinking water** in their living area, improving confidence in tap water. According to estimates, the new measures would reduce potential health risks associated with drinking water from 4% to below 1%. Lower consumption of bottled water can in addition **help households in Europe save more than €600 million per year**. With improved confidence in tap water, citizens can also contribute to reducing plastic waste from bottled water, including marine litter. Plastic bottles are one of the most common single use plastic items found on European beaches. With the update of the Drinking Water Directive, the Commission takes with an important legislative step towards implementing the EU Plastics Strategy presented on 16 January 2018. Better management of drinking water from Member States will **avoid unnecessary loss of water** and contribute to **lowering the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint**. The proposal will therefore make a meaningful contribution to reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 6) and the Paris Agreement objectives on climate change. The new risk-based approach to safety will help to carry out safety checks in a more targeted manner where risks are higher. In parallel, the Commission will also accelerate work on standardisation to ensure that construction products in the water sector across the EU's internal market, such as pipes and tanks, do not pollute drinking water.

### Background

Most people living in the EU already enjoy very good access to high quality drinking water, especially compared to some other regions in the world, thanks in part to over 30 years of EU legislation on drinking water quality. This policy ensures that water intended for human consumption can be consumed safely, protecting citizens' health. The main pillars of the policy are to:

- Ensure that drinking water quality is controlled through standards based on the latest scientific evidence;
- Secure an efficient and effective monitoring, assessment and enforcement of drinking water quality;
- Provide consumers with adequate, timely and appropriately information.

The revision of the Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC was included in the Commission's 2017 Work Programme, as a direct follow up to the Right2Water European Citizens' Initiative. The proposal follows the [REFIT Evaluation of the Drinking Water Directive](#) and is accompanied by an Impact Assessment and by WHO recommendations.

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## 7. Social media companies need to do more for consumer rules

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**Social media companies need to do more to respond to the requests, made last March by the European Commission and Member States' consumer authorities, to comply with EU consumer rules.**

The changes made by Facebook, Twitter and Google+ to align their terms of services with EU consumer protection rules have been published. These changes will already benefit more than a quarter of a billion of EU consumers who use social media: EU consumers will not be forced to waive mandatory EU consumer rights, such as their right to withdraw from an on-line purchase; they will be able to lodge their complaints in Europe, rather than in California; and the platforms will take up their fair share of responsibilities towards EU consumers, similarly to the off-line service providers. However, the changes only partially fulfil the requirements under EU consumer law. Vera **Jourová**, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"As social media networks are used as advertising and commercial platforms, they must fully respect consumer rules. I am pleased that the enforcement of EU rules to protect consumers by national authorities is bearing fruit, as some companies are now making their platforms safer for consumers; however, it is unacceptable that this is still not complete and it is taking so much time. This confirms that we need a 'New Deal for Consumers': EU consumer rules should be respected and if companies don't comply, they should face sanctions."* While Google's latest proposals appear to be in line with the requests made by consumer authorities, Facebook and, more significantly, Twitter, have only partially addressed important issues about their liability and about how users are informed of possible content removal or contract termination.

When it comes to the "notice and action procedure" used by consumer protection authorities to report and request the removal of illegal content, the changes by some companies are insufficient. While Google+ has set up a protocol, including deadlines to deal with the requests, Facebook and Twitter have only agreed to provide a dedicated e-mail address that national authorities can use to notify infringements, without committing to deal with such requests within specific timeframes. Following numerous complaints by consumers who had been targeted by fraud or scams when using these websites, as well as having been subject to certain terms of services that do not respect EU consumer law, an enforcement action was launched in November 2016. Since then, social media operators specifically agreed to amend:



the "notice and action procedure" used by consumer protection authorities to report and request the removal of illegal content, the changes by some companies are insufficient. While Google+ has set up a protocol, including deadlines to deal with the requests, Facebook and Twitter have only agreed to provide a dedicated e-mail address that national authorities can use to notify infringements, without committing to deal with such requests within specific timeframes. Following numerous complaints by consumers who had been targeted by fraud or scams when using these websites, as well as having been subject to certain terms of services that do not respect EU consumer law, an enforcement action was launched in November 2016. Since then, social media operators specifically agreed to amend:

- the terms of services limiting or totally excluding the liability of social media networks in connection with the performance of the service;
- the terms requiring consumers to waive mandatory EU consumer rights, such as their right to withdraw from an on-line purchase;
- the terms depriving consumers of their right to go to court in their Member State of residence, and providing the application of California law;
- the term releasing the platform from the duty to identify commercial communications and sponsored content.

The companies committed to implement the changes to their terms in all language versions in the first quarter of 2018.

### Next steps

As already stated in its Communication on tackling illegal content online published in September 2017, the Commission expects online platforms to swiftly and proactively detect, remove and prevent the re-appearance of illegal content online. The Commission is currently working on the follow-up actions to this Communication. The national consumer authorities and the Commission

will monitor the implementation of the promised changes and will actively use the notice and action procedure provided by the companies. They will focus on illegal commercial content concerning unwanted subscriptions and other scams. Moreover, authorities may take action including enforcement measures where necessary. The Commission will present in April a 'New Deal for Consumers'. This reform will propose to modernise the existing consumer law and ensure that they are properly enforced.

#### **Background**

On 16 March 2017, EU consumer authorities and the European Commission met with the companies to hear and discuss their proposed solutions. Following this meeting, the companies have made certain changes to their terms and conditions. However, the Commission and consumer authorities consider that further changes have to be made urgently. The Consumer Protection Cooperation authorities, under the lead of the French Directorate General for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF), sent a common position to Facebook, Twitter and Google+ in November 2016 asking them to improve a number of contract terms and set up a system to tackle illegal commercial content upon notification. The EU Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation link national consumer authorities in a pan-European enforcement network. Thanks to this framework, a national authority in one EU country can call on their counterpart in another EU country to ask them to intervene in case of a cross-border infringement of EU consumer rules. Cooperation is common to various consumer-related pieces of legislation, such as the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, the E-commerce Directive, the Consumer Rights Directive or the Unfair Contract Terms Directive. Under the CPC framework, authorities regularly review issues of common concern for consumer protection in the Single Market and coordinate their market surveillance and potential enforcement actions. The Commission facilitates the exchange of information among authorities and their coordination. Online platforms need to take greater responsibility in content governance. The Communication provides common tools to swiftly and proactively detect, remove and prevent illegal content online from reappearing.

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## **8. Young people put forward their ideas for the future of Europe**

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### **Commissioner Tibor Navracsics receives young people to discuss their views on the future of Europe, and how to better take their priorities into account.**

100 young people from across Europe are presenting their concrete ideas on how to give Europe a bright future, following discussions in the context of the [New Narrative for Europe initiative](#).



These recommendations come alongside the results of a new Eurobarometer survey, which shows that youth participation in voluntary activities, organisations and elections has increased over the past years. The closing event of the **New Narrative for Europe** initiative, taking place in Brussels, brings together the results of discussions young people held over the last two years. The project reached as many as **62,000 young people** through a series of debates taking place Europe-wide. As a result, young people put forward **twelve concrete ideas** for Europe's future. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said, "*Seeing young people so engaged, and hearing their*

*refreshing ideas fills me with optimism about Europe's future. I will study the recommendations from the New Narrative for Europe with utmost attention. But this is not the end of the process – young people must be at the heart of the debate on the future of Europe, and that is why I would like these reflections to continue.*" The ideas presented were tested in a recent **Eurobarometer** to check their resonance with a broader group of young people. The survey, which consulted about 11,000 citizens aged 15 to 30 in September 2017 shows that they mostly agree with the need to:



- Promote critical thinking and the ability to search for information to combat fake news and extremism (49%);
- Give easy access to information about moving and working abroad (49%);
- Promote behavioural change through environmentally-friendly initiatives such as sustainable transport or recycling systems across Europe (40%).

**Other main findings of the Eurobarometer include:**

- More than half of young Europeans consider education and skills as the top priority that the EU should tackle. Environmental protection and fighting climate change come second, followed by employment, and the management of migratory flows and integration of refugees;
- Young people have been more active than in the previous survey done in December 2014. 31% of respondents stated that they had been involved in organised voluntary activities in the last 12 months;
- More than half are involved in organisations such as sports clubs, youth clubs or local NGOs;
- In particular, 64% of the respondents say that they have voted in a political election in the last 3 years.

**Background**

With the debate on the future of Europe in full swing, education and youth have been high up on the political agenda of the EU. Heads of State and Government discussed the future of education, culture and youth at the Gothenburg Social Summit on 17 November 2017. This resulted in the European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 calling on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take the agenda discussed in Gothenburg forward. Recommendations put forward will feed into the future work of the Commission on education, culture and youth policies. The New Narrative for Europe ran for over five years, having begun as a Pilot Project and continued as a Preparatory Action, both supported by the European Parliament. In 2013-2014 the Pilot Project gave a voice to the artistic, cultural, scientific and intellectual communities, so as to help connect the general public with the European integration project via the arts and sciences. From 2015 onwards, it focused on involving young people from diverse backgrounds. To keep supporting discussions across Europe and as a concrete result of the project, the European Commission will capture all the ideas, written and audio-visual materials produced by young people in an online toolkit. The toolkit will be available in the EU's 24 official languages and will be accompanied with guidance on how to moderate the discussion. The EU has a number of tools in place to encourage youth participation in society and democratic life: the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps are just two examples of powerful instruments to bring young people together and encourage them to have their say, promote mutual understanding and share common European values. The [EU Youth Strategy](#) also has a strong focus on participation, with the structured dialogue process that involves young people in exchanges and consultations all over Europe. The European Commission will table its proposals for a new EU Youth Strategy in spring 2018, with a view to reaching out to a larger, more diverse group of young people.

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## 9. Integration of migrants: toolkit to the best use of EU funds

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**The Commission is publishing a toolkit to help national and regional authorities design strategies and projects to integrate migrants and identify available EU resources.**

The purpose of the [toolkit](#) is to help set up local integration strategies supported by EU resources used in synergy, still in the current 2014-2020 budget period. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos said: *"Investing in integration policies today is key to making sure Europe stays a prosperous, cohesive, and inclusive society in the future. This will be our priority for the coming years. It is only through successful integration that we can make migration a real opportunity for all, for our citizens, for migrants and refugees, and for our societies overall."* Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, added: *"The optimal use of EU funds, like the European Social Fund, plays an important role in supporting the integration of people with a migrant background, while further continuing to invest in the EU's existing work force. In addition, we have set up a Skills Profile Tool*





that helps third-country nationals present their skills on the European labour market." Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** commented: "The EU's ambition is to turn the migration challenge into opportunities for our societies and economies. This toolkit is a brick in that wall; it will contribute to a successful integration of migrants at local level, supported by the EU and its resources." The toolkit identifies five priorities for holistic and efficient long-term integration strategies: reception; education; employment; housing; and access to public services. It lists the most pressing challenges under these five priorities and suggests adequate support measures, each one of them matched with the right EU fund. For example, in the field of education, different EU funds can be used jointly to make schools more inclusive and non-segregated: upgraded and accessible facilities can be financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The European Social Fund (ESF) and the AMIF can support special training for educators to help them tackle dropout, while the FEAD can provide material assistance to students in need. Member States and regions have a wide range of EU funding instruments at their disposal that can support different types of projects in the field of integration – from providing language classes and healthcare upon arrival to helping migrants find a job, a home to live in and a place in society. This includes funding under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) or the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

#### **Background:**

Whilst responsibility for integration lies primarily with the Member States, in the 2016 Action Plan on Integration the EU has established measures to provide incentives and support for Member States in their efforts to promote integration of third country nationals. This includes dedicated funding and instruments addressing social and economic cohesion across Member States. In addition, one of the actions under the New Skills Agenda for Europe includes the set-up of the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals, an off – and online tool that will make it possible for non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications, and experiences in a way that is well understood by employers, education and training providers and organisations working with migrants across the whole European Union. In the mid-term review of the 2014-2020 budget framework, the Commission proposed to introduce a new priority for investments in the current Cohesion Policy regulation, solely dedicated to the integration of migrants. This aims to facilitate the modification of Cohesion Policy programmes to redirect funding towards new priorities arising from the migration challenge.

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## **10. Security Union: Commission follows up on terrorist radicalisation**

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**The European Commission reports on progress made towards an effective and genuine Security Union, including priorities like countering radicalisation, enhancing cybersecurity and protecting public spaces.**

As security is identified as a key priority in the Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-19, the Commission is also setting out a number of measures to be taken over the coming months to strengthen support to Member States and speed up EU work. The Commission will continue to drive progress ahead of the September informal leaders' meeting on security,



announced in the Leaders' Agenda. Commissioner for Home Affairs, Migration and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "Security remains a key challenge for Europe and a number one priority for the EU, as reflected in the EU Institutions' Joint Declaration for 2018-19. We must continue to make use of this strong momentum and deliver concrete results for our security, collectively. We need to do more to keep European citizens safe both offline and online. Fighting terrorist propaganda online remains an area where there is a clear urgency to act. The Commission will act if needed and all options remain on the table." Commissioner for the

Security Union Julian **King** said: "Over the past year we have intensified efforts to close information gaps, fight radicalisation, scale up cyber resilience, and protect our public spaces. This comprehensive approach is bringing results: but we need to keep the momentum going to ensure a genuine, effective Security Union. We must deal with the terrorist problem at its heart – the radicalisation that can drive people in Europe to violent and extremist ideologies. We will continue

*working with experts, policy makers and internet companies on this vital issue – there is much still to do."*

### **Stepping up the fight against radicalisation**

In its interim report, the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation – set up by the Commission in July 2017 – called for more systematic exchanges on anti-radicalisation between Member States, practitioners and researchers as well as stronger EU support. As a first step to follow up on these recommendations, the Commission will strengthen the coordination at EU level to prevent terrorism. The Commission will also strengthen action against radicalisation in prisons, and against terrorist propaganda both online and offline. The Commission is urging online platforms to speed up their efforts to remove online terrorist content as quickly as possible, and is looking into more specific steps to improve the response to terrorist content online, before deciding whether legislation is needed. Following the territorial losses of Daesh in Syria and Iraq, a Commission-organised conference in April will discuss how Member States are dealing with returnees, including women and children.

### **Mobilising efforts on cybersecurity and the protection of public spaces**

The Commission continues to implement its September 2017 cybersecurity strategy, establishing a Network of Cybersecurity Competence Centres and a Cybersecurity Research and Competence Centre. In the first quarter of 2018, a €50 million pilot project under Horizon 2020 will support creation of this Network. The Commission will also make an additional €5 million available to reinforce Europol's decryption capabilities to support law enforcement in criminal investigations, as announced in its 11<sup>th</sup> Progress Report and following up on Member States' call for further support at the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting last December. As regards the protection of public spaces, cooperation is being intensified between private operators of public spaces, such as transport hubs, stadiums and shopping centres, and local and regional authorities. In December, the Commission organised the first meeting of the EU Operators Forum focusing on information exchange and guidance on detection as well as the testing of new technology and security solutions. This was followed by a first dedicated meeting with the car rental industry to explore possible joint action to make it more difficult for terrorists to rent vehicles for the purpose of committing attacks. In January 2018 a security toolkit will be published to provide guidance to European truck drivers, haulage companies and other key stakeholders to address possible threats from terrorism. As part of these efforts, the Commission will set up an online portal for all actors involved to share best practices and is organising, with the Committee of the Regions, a conference with city mayors from across Europe on 8 March.



### **Progress on terrorist financing, aviation and other priorities**

The report also takes stock of the progress made in the implementation of other priority files under the European Agenda for Security including information exchange, terrorist financing, security research and aviation security, as well as the external dimension. The Commission is urging the co-legislators to reach agreement on a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and proposals to strengthen the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the coming weeks.

### **Background**

Security has been a political priority since the beginning of the Juncker Commission's mandate – from President Juncker's Political Guidelines of July 2014 to the latest State of the Union address on 13 September 2017. On 14 December 2017, the presidents of the European Parliament, the rotating Presidency of the Council and the European Commission signed a Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-2019, which underlined the central importance of better protecting the security of citizens by placing it at the heart of the Union's legislative work. Priority was given to initiatives designed to ensure that Member States' authorities know who is crossing the common EU external border, to establishing interoperable EU information systems for security, border and migration management, and to reinforcing the instruments in the fight against terrorism and against money laundering. The [European Agenda on Security](#) guides the Commission's work in this area, setting out the main actions to ensure an effective EU response to terrorism and security threats, including countering radicalisation, boosting cybersecurity, cutting terrorist financing as well as improving information exchange. Since the adoption of the Agenda, significant progress has been made in its implementation, paving the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union. This progress is reflected in the Commission's reports published on a regular basis.

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## 11. Lorenzo Natali Media Prize for outstanding journalism in development

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**Applications for the European Commission's 2018 Lorenzo Natali Media Prize, which recognises journalists doing outstanding reporting on development topics, are open from 5 February to 9 March for online, print and audio-visual works.**

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica said: "In an era of disinformation, fake news and digital algorithms, we need professional and fact-based journalism



more than ever. The important work of journalists is not only crucial for democracy across the globe, but also gives visibility and a voice to those who would otherwise not be heard. Through their stories they inform, inspire, and call for much-needed change. With this prize, we thank them for their determination and encourage them to keep up the fight." The Lorenzo Natali Media Prize is awarded to journalists reporting on issues such as poverty eradication and the economic, social and environmental

dimensions of sustainable development. **How to apply:** Journalists are invited to [submit their work](#), be it in print, digital, radio or TV broadcast format. Applications are open **from 5 February until 9 March 2018**. Detailed information on the [specific rules and criteria](#) are available online. **Prize categories:** The prize has two categories based on age groups: 21 to 26 years, and 27 years plus. For each category there will be a winner from each region: Africa; the Arab World and the Middle East; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Europe. A "Grand Winner" will be selected among the regional winners, and an additional thematic prize will be awarded for work focused on the elimination of violence against women and girls. The selection will be carried out by a "Grand Jury" composed of renowned journalists from across the world. This year's jury members include Bruce Shapiro from the Columbia School of Journalism, Peruvian reporter and founder of "Panorámica Lationamericana" Isabel Recavarren, New Delhi-based journalist and President of the Commonwealth Journalists Association Mahendra Ved, Le Soir's Maroun Labaki, and Mary Harper, the BBC World Service's Africa Editor. All 11 winners will receive their awards at a ceremony during the 2018 European Development Days in Brussels this June.

### Background

Established in 1992, this media prize is awarded in memory of Lorenzo Natali, who served as a European Commissioner for 12 years. He was responsible among others for the international cooperation and development affairs portfolio between 1985 and 1989. He was a staunch defender of the freedom of expression, democracy, human rights and development.

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## 12. Photo contest: win a place at the European Youth Event

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**Take part in Parliament's Instagram photo contest for the chance to win a place at the 2018 European Youth Event (EYE) in Strasbourg.**

If you want a chance to participate in this year's European Youth Event on 1-2 June, get snapping and share your photos with us on [Instagram](#).

**The rules:** In order to qualify you must be aged 18 or over, live in an EU country and have full copyright ownership of the photos you share.

**How to enter:** Choose one of the five topics on the EYE's agenda and take a photo to illustrate it: #YoungOld; #RichPoor; #ApartTogether; #SafeDangerous; #LocalGlobal. You can submit as many photos as you like in as many categories as you choose. Share the photo using the hashtag #EYE2018, as well as the hashtag

for the category, and tag [@EuropeanParliament](#) and [@ep\\_eye](#). The contest runs until midnight CET on 22 April. **The results:** One winner will be chosen in each category, in addition an overall winner will be selected based on the number of "likes" his or her photos receives on social media.





The six lucky winners will then be invited to Strasbourg to take part in the EYE event. During the contest, Parliament's Instagram account will repost a selection of the best photos and the overall winner will be decided based on which photos gets the most likes. A selection of the best shots together with the winning photos will be exhibited during the EYE event.

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### 13. Playable Museum Award – Open Call

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The museum of the future is in the hands of those who can imagine it, design and execute it. The



Museo Marino Marini of Florence calls together creatives and dreamers from all over the world, giving life to an open and accessible collective platform. The open call is a place where outside-of-the-box ideas come together to create a “playable” museum – a place of action and interaction between people, the collections and their spaces. The challenge is to transform the museums into places of cultural production, multipurpose spaces where developers, makers, artists, storytellers, and designers work to blend the past and future, remixing technology and

the humanities to create new models. A museum thus becomes a hub of innovation, a primary destination for innovators and dreamers from around the world and an active protagonist in designing the future. The [Playable Museum Award](#) has been conceived to bring innovative solutions that transform the museum experience. Some of the themes we would like you to address in your ideas and / or prototypes are:

- Remix technology with creativity to surprise the museum visitor
- Stimulate new physical or digital connections between the museum and the urban space around it
- Promote dialogue between people by connecting the non-connected
- Transform the museum into a place that goes beyond conservation and preservation into a hub of cultural and artistic production
- Imagine ways to personalize the visit in relation to the different needs of each visitor
- Create new ways of connecting visitors with the museum, also before and after the visit
- Make the museum areas lively and joyful
- Stimulate a dialogue between the artworks and the visitors
- Engage younger generations
- Reimagine the narrative and artistic languages describing the museum
- Promote action and interaction with the visitor

**Who:** creatives and dreamers; **Deadline:** March 31st, 2018; **Cost to enter:** free; **Grant:** 10.000 euro grant + mentorship.

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### 14. Apply for a UNCCD internship

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The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD) welcomes graduate students and recent graduates specializing in a field related to the work of the United Nations and UNCCD. These internships are intended to promote a better understanding of international problems and give insight into the work of the United Nations, while providing departments with the able assistance of outstanding young students specializing in a field related to their own work. The minimum internship duration is two months and maximum six months.



Interns are not financially remunerated by the UNCCD secretariat. Costs and arrangement for travel, visas, accommodation and living expenses are the responsibility of intern or his/her sponsoring institution. Interns of the UNCCD secretariat are not considered to be staff members. Application for internships is open, and qualified candidates are always encouraged to apply.



**Internship application checklist:** Cover letter; Curriculum vitae; UNCCD internship application. If you have a license to Adobe Acrobat, download and complete the Internship application .pdf fill-in form in the below drop-down menu to be able to save your progress. Simply type your name in the signature fields. Printing and scanning the form is not necessary. **Internship application with adobe acrobat:** [Internship application form](#). If you **do not** have a license to Adobe Acrobat, complete the Internship application form.docx in the below drop-down menu. Please type your name in the signature fields. Printing and scanning the form is not necessary. Please read the Conditions form and Annex, but there is no need to sign and return them at this time. **Internship application materials:** [Internship application form.docx](#); [Conditions form.pdf](#) ; [Annex form.pdf](#). Send your application materials to [staffing@unccd.int](mailto:staffing@unccd.int) .

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## 15. Approved two new KA1 projects and one KA2 new project

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EURO-NET has received the approval of 2 youth exchanges (one in the UK and the other in Latvia). Soon we will give more information on the aforementioned activities. This year, therefore, has started off on the right foot and we will be able to respond effectively to the expectations of young and old in our region! So keep following us in all our initiatives and activities because we will continue to offer you the opportunity to experience unforgettable experiences. Has been approved also a new KA2 project of which our EURO-NET association is a partner. Initially, the project "Experiential Pedagogy of the Oppressed For Adults" had been included in the reserve lists: later the Turkish Agency approved the project albeit with a reduction in the budget!

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## 16. Europe Direct for 2018-2020

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In August, the European Commission's Representation in Italy published a call for proposals to renew the Europe Direct information centre network for the period 2018-2020. The Europe Direct centres are the official information network of the European Commission on the territory: their communication activities aim to interest citizens in European issues and to promote dialogue on European issues, also in collaboration with other information networks and points. contact information of the EU or local authorities. The selected centres will receive a grant of between € 25,000 and € 32,000 a year from the European Commission to carry out information and communication activities. In recent days, the Representation has announced the names of the EDIC centres for the three-year period 2018-2020 (the new network has been operational since this month of January). Well, our EURO-NET association, already winner of all the last editions of the EDIC call and therefore currently Europe Direct Basilicata centre, has been nominated in the aforementioned call and has been confirmed as an information centre of the European Commission also for the next three years 2018-2020!



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## 17. Safer Places Hopeful Refugees project: third course in Greece

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From 13 to 18 January took place in Athens in Greece, the third training course (foreseen in the project "Safer Places Hopeful Refugees") intended to show good practices in welcoming refugees. The project, approved in the Erasmus Plus program KA2 actions for adult education, has as its main objective to exchange good practices on the reception of refugees and migrants trying to provide support actions to them. The initiative aims to promote positive actions for refugees at local and international level. The objectives of the project are:

- Strengthen the capacity of organizations working for refugees and also the skills of their staff;
- Strengthen sustainable development and solidarity at the global level;
- Promote international cooperation and intercultural communication;
- Improving social inclusion and equal opportunities for refugees;

- Develop networks and connections at local, national and international levels.

4 trainers from our organization participated in the course. This time the educational theme was



dedicated to illegal maritime traffic and voluntary activities for refugees. During the five days of training, have been visited many Greek organizations that play an active role in the integration of refugees and migrants. Furthermore, it was possible to discuss and debate on how this delicate and complicated issue is managed and addressed in other European countries. Among the activities foreseen in the training course the participants had the opportunity to visit the TOPOS ALLOU theatre which

deals with social integration and was very excited to see a theatrical representation on the conditions that the refugees live when they flee their countries. All the activities were formative and interesting but the one carried out by ActionAid was particularly engaging because the theatre exercises were carried out following which the participants represented some themes that emerged during the working groups.

## 18. Third meeting of the EuroYouth Media Lab project in Baena, Spain

From 14 to 18 January the third meeting of the EuroYouth MEDIALAB project, approved by the French National Agency, was held in Baena, Spain, as part of the Erasmus Plus KA2 program. The project sees the participation of Europe Direct centers of the following 10 partner countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, Finland, France (coordinating country), Poland, Slovakia, Northern Ireland (UK), Sweden and Italy. The aim is to create media laboratories with local youth groups to talk about Europe and the problems that afflict it today. In the last months of 2017 several meetings of the second year of activity were realized in Italy with the group of young people taking part in the project as a "local group" who, under the supervision of a tutor, also made some videos.



## 19. EURBanities: 8th meeting in Finland



From 18 to 21 January, was held the eighth meeting of the "EURBANITIES - EMPOWERING CIVIL PARTICIPATION THROUGH GAME BASED LEARNING" project - approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency of Germany under the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnership for adult education (action 2015-1-DE02-KA204-002434). Throughout Europe, citizen participation is often hampered by the lack of information but also by the age-old lack of communication and cooperation between the involved parties, as well as limited access to knowledge of the options available to express local interests. Citizens and stakeholders

therefore require tools that can help overcome obstacles to participation. Our project involves the creation of a learning tool aimed at empowering citizens through the simulation of neighbourhood participation. During the meeting, the state of development of the initiative and of the other project activities to be developed in the coming months were discussed. Two delegates from our association participated in the meeting.

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## 20. VET4MIGRE: first meeting in Copenhagen (YES)

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The first meeting of the project "VET OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES" (whose acronym is "VET4MIGRE") approved in Denmark by the Erasmus Plus Agency took place from 3 to 4 January 2018. The Italian partner is YOUTH EUROPE SERVICE, an association of the city of Potenza. This is a project approved under the European program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Training as Action n. 2017-1-DK01-KA202-034224. During the meeting, project partners planned the

project activities to be developed in the coming months.

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## 21. Europe in the way: course in Santiago (YES)

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From 7 to 13 January 2018 a training course was held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, as part of the "Europe in the way" project approved as action no. 2017-1-IT02-KA104-035525 from the Erasmus Plus National Agency Indire as part of the Erasmus Plus program - Individual learning mobility - Mobility of students and staff. The course held by the Spanish organization "Postal 3" was attended by 2 delegates from the Youth Europe Service of Potenza (but also from many other foreigners from other countries). The course was very interesting and allowed the participants to plan various project initiatives to be nominated for the next deadlines of the European program.



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## 22. The StereoSciFi project start-up meeting was completed

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The first meeting of the "STEREOSCIFI - Stereotypes and Hard Science Fiction" project took place from 22 to 23 January 2018. The project was approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency of Portugal as part of the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership program for adult education. The main objective is to promote equality and inclusion by improving the social competences of students. The partnership discussed the operational plan for action development and its financial issues. The partners were also presented with both the dissemination plan and the project

evaluation plan, outlining the development of the first phase.

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## 23. Internship at our association

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Our association is hosting, as an intern, Dr. Sara Pepe in the context of Youth Guarantee, the initiative in favor of youth employment promoted by the European Social Fund. During the work-experience, the trainee will be able to acquire and reinforce the basic theoretical knowledge and achieve operational skills in order to contribute to the functioning of the host structure through the teaching method learning - by doing. The intern works under the supervision of a company tutor, who follows step by step all the activities carried out by the latter, indicating suitable solutions for each initiative to be undertaken and / or for information to be developed.





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## 24. VET4MIGRE: at work on the website and initial research

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"VET4MIGRE" is a project approved under the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Action Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Training (Action No. 2017-1-DK01-KA202-034224). The project, which has as partner the Italian association Youth Europe Service, starts from the result of a research



conducted by the European Commission in 2015 (according to which more than 1.8 million immigrants of non-European origin reside in Europe and risk being marginalized) and from the observation of the situation of difficulties that migrants and refugees encounter in the destination countries. It is therefore more important than ever to develop new, creative and far-sighted strategies and practical ways, so that the refugee and migrant population adapts, integrates and becomes a positive member in the host country: one of the safest ways seems to be to integrate them into the labor market. Work by offering the training and mentoring opportunities necessary to become self-employed, as migrants and refugees can indeed become an important workforce for the host countries. The project, therefore, in line with the above, wants to try to include

migrants in the European economy by encouraging: strengthening competences in ICT and innovations; the improvement of soft skills and competences; the promotion and exchange of good practices; the development of situations that facilitate better integration. To do this, the project will develop the following four intellectual outputs of different types (reports, guides, DVD, Internet platform), on which the whole partnership will work for a period of twenty-eight months:

- Survey on the inclusion of migrants in local EU economies
- Guide for migrant entrepreneurs
- Toolkit for migrant trainers
- Online entrepreneurship course for migrants

To support the above outputs, the following activities will be implemented: an educational event in which the staff will learn the methodology of a rapid teaching in a language course (expected in Bulgaria in April 2019); five transnational meetings to reflect, monitor and evaluate the activities developed and plan new ones; five multiplier events in which all the results will be publicized / disseminated in Denmark, Italy, Greece, Spain and Bulgaria; many products of communication, dissemination and evaluation. At the moment the partners are working on the construction of the website ([www.vet4migre.eu](http://www.vet4migre.eu)) and on the development of research on the migrants of the Intellectual Output 1.

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## 25. Completed the 3DP course in Malta

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From 22nd to 26th January 2018 a training course was held in Malta (attended by 2 delegates for each partner of the initiative) foreseen by the project TRAINING IN 3D PRINTING TO FOSTER EU INNOVATION & CREATIVITY (acronym "3DP") on printers in 3 dimensions of which the company Godesk srl of Potenza is a partner. The project is aimed at companies, organizations, and people interested in using or supporting others in using the 3D printing revolution, in different sectors: education, industry, art, intermediation, entrepreneurship, law, politics, finance, etc. The objectives are to develop active cooperation between universities, vocational training managers, companies and certification centres; create an online training environment for the 3D printer industry; research good practices and case studies in the project area; publish a guide for trainers of multilingual 3D printers. In these days a pilot course on 3D printers is hosted in Godesk.





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## 26. Completed the first course of the PerformAction project

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From 5 to 9 February, was held in London the first training course of the project, in which 3 artists representing our association participated. The "Perform Action performing arts for education and training" project was approved as part of the Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnership Program for Adult Education (Action No. 2017- 1-UK01-KA204-036779). The role of art and performing arts in formal and non-formal education is relevant to pursuing learning methods, to reinvent itself not only as a person, but also as a group and to learn art to live together despite the respective differences and attitudes. The specific objectives of adult education aim to improve and broaden the offer of high quality learning opportunities, extending and developing the skills of educators for better information and to improve learning outcomes.

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## 27. Successfully closed the first EDIC meeting in Rome

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From February 15th to 16th the first national meeting of the Europe Direct network was held, which this time was held in the city of Rome. The meeting was attended by a representative of each Europe Direct office in order to be able to compare on the activities and objectives of the European area. Our manager, Antonino Imbesi, took part in the meeting for our centre.



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## 28. IV4J: the meeting in Magdeburg concluded

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From February 11th to 14th a new project meeting took place in Magdeburg, Germany, during which special attention was paid to the development of actions and intellectual products created in recent months, the situation of the activities carried out and of the next steps to be implemented. IV4J is a project that aims to introduce a strong innovation in the system of vocational education and training thanks to alternative and successful methodologies and strategies for the learning environment, in order to create a new system aimed at work-oriented learning. The selected methodologies and approaches are: entrepreneurship education, work-based learning, Creative Problem Solving Methodology, Web 2.0 tools for VET, 40 Gamification, Digital Simulation and storytelling, Open Educational Resources, ECVET implementation.



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## 29. Second meeting in Italy of the SME project


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From 21 to 24 February 2017, the second meeting of the "Skills for Migrants Entrepreneurs (SME)" project will be realised in Potenza, Italy (Erasmus Plus KA2 action No. 2017-1-SE01-KA202-034586). The EU has understood that the integration of immigrants plays a crucial role: human capital is a very important key to the innovative performance of regions and countries and research has shown that the human capital of specialized migrants is a significant source of innovation in the host countries. The project aims to create tools to support the integration and creation of new companies created by skilled migrants through guides, online training and relationships. There are 5 project meetings; 1 staff training event; 6 multiple events; 5 intellectual products. During the meeting the partners will take stock of the activities developed in recent



months and will define further steps of the project. More information on the meeting will be available on our next newsletter.

### 30. Fifth meeting in Denmark of the SPAHCO project



From February 25th to 28th the fifth meeting of the "Stronger Parents - Healthier Communities" (SPAHCO) project (approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 Adult Education programme) will be held in Denmark. The aim of the project is to develop ICT tools (including an app and an electronic game) and innovative methodologies for parents, to make them more aware of the importance of performing healthier lifestyles and offering them activities and tools to achieve these aims. On the basis of the previous meeting, served to take stock of the situation on the APP, the research carried out at local level and the egame, the Danish meeting will serve to define further developments of the project and to give definitive indications for the intellectual products being implemented. More information on the meeting will be available on our next newsletter.

### 31. Second meeting in Luxembourg of the MORE THAN WORDS project

From 1 to 4 March 2018 will take place in Luxembourg the second meeting of the project "More Than Words - Integrating Creativity in Intercultural Training", approved in the Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education (Action No. 2017-1-UK01-KA204-036613). The project aims to improve intercultural communication skills and the training of educators, social workers and all those involved as professionals or artists to support migrants and other minorities facing problems of integration and communication. The meeting will be attended by 2 representatives of EURO-NET (Italian partner of the European initiative). More information on the meeting will be available on our next newsletter.



### 32. First course of the MORE THAN WORDS project in London

The first training course of the project "More Than Words - Integrating Creativity in Intercultural Training" will take place in London, from 11 to 17 March. It is aimed at improving the intercultural skills of the staff of the Erasmus Plus project partner organizations, which are: Border Crossings Company Limited (United Kingdom); Comparative Research Network e.V. (Germany); EURO-NET (Italy); Integralt Kifejezes-es Tancterapias Egyesulet (Hungary); Association of the Egyptiens au Luxembourg (Luxembourg); Stowarzyszenie "Dia Ziemi" (Poland); Network African Rural and Urban



### 33. Concluded the second meeting in Istanbul of the GPEUMP project

The Mid-Term evaluation meeting of the "Gender Perspective in EU Mobility Programs" project took place from 16 to 18 February in Turkey. The project, approved under the Erasmus Plus KA2 actions program, aims to integrate the gender perspective in the European Union mobility programs and thereby increase the visibility of gender issues in youth organizations. It is evident, in fact, that gender discrimination is a global / transnational problem and affects the whole life of young women all over the world including Europe, where



discriminatory actions or sexual harassment against young women still persist. Therefore the project, discussing the prevention suggestions against such measures and the development of reliable solutions, will contribute to increasing the quality of female mobility in exchange programs. The meeting focused on the state of development of the initiative and other project activities to be developed in the coming months until the end of the activities.

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### 34. WE CAN exchange in Germany

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The youth exchange under the title "We can" was developed in Germany. The exchange was attended by 4 young people and a leader who were engaged in daily activities in the formal and non-formal education sector in order to enrich their personal and professional skills: in this way we tried to strengthen youth dialogue on the issues of violence and bullying. More information on youth exchange will be provided in future newsletters.

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### 35. Next meeting ACCESS ANGELS in Mikulov in the Czech Republic

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The next meeting of the "Guardian Angels of Accessible Travelers in Rural Areas" project (acronym "Access Angels"), approved in the Erasmus Plus KA2 program, will take place in Mikulov, Czech Republic from 15 to 16 March. In the previous meeting, held in Spain, the following steps of the project were defined. The project is developing a package of personal assistance services (PAS) offered by young volunteers, similar to those services offered to disabled tourists in large cities, but adapted to the needs of visitors with disabilities who want to experience rural tourism. The project aims to contribute to employability, economic growth and social cohesion through vocational training; offer adults and young people career opportunities through education and vocational training; promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labor market; ensure the sustainability and excellence of vocational education and training; use the VET to support sustainable development and the provision of social education to young people; contribute to the development of rural economies; increase awareness of the needs of people with disabilities in rural areas; fostering active citizenship and volunteering among young people. Further information on the project, of which the Youth Europe Service association is an Italian partner, is available on the following [website](#) or on the initiative's [facebook page](#).



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### 36. The first SURVIVE course at Potenza is finished

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From 6 to 10 February, the first course of "SURVIVE", of which Godesk is the coordinator, took place in Italy, in Potenza. This is a project developed within the "Erasmus Plus program KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Training - exchange of good practices" approved by the Erasmus Plus National Agency INAPP. Its goal is to investigate the techniques and methodologies that in a period of crisis allow companies to overcome difficulties and survive them, using the moment of crisis to increase their markets and turnover. The course has addressed the issues of online marketing as a tool to strengthen businesses, applying it to the automotive and agriculture, two primary sectors for regional industry.